

October 10, 2018



**NEW JERSEY
HIGHLANDS COALITION**

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NJ Highlands Coalition Announces Grants to Local Groups for Environmental and Cultural Protection

BOONTON, N. J. – Local grassroots organizations protecting water and other environmental resources and cultural and historic treasures in the New Jersey Highlands have been awarded grants up to \$5000 through the New Jersey Highlands Coalition’s 2018 Small Grants Program.

The announcement was made and checks were presented on October 10 at the N.J. Highlands Coalition’s Annual Meeting at the Lake Hopatcong Yacht Club.

“Over many years, we’ve seen that these grants are the seed money that unleashes the energy and expertise of local community groups,” said Julia Somers, Executive Director of the N.J. Highlands Coalition. “This is the twelfth year for our environmental grants, and the fourth year of grants for cultural protections. This early funding supports the real strength of our program, the local residents who know their communities best and care deeply about protecting irreplaceable natural and cultural resources.”

This year’s grants are presented in honor of Connie Stroh, who passed away this year and was the longtime leader of The Upper Rockaway River Watershed Association. The Association has dissolved its organization and donated its remaining assets to help fund the Small Grants Program. Additional funding has been provided by the F.M. Kirby Foundation.

Listed below are the grassroots groups selected to receive 2018 grants that will help protect the manmade and natural assets of the Highlands Region, an area that provides drinking water for 70% of New Jersey residents.

Boonton Trails Committee to hire a cultural resources expert to assist in drafting the nomination documentation to have the Arch Bridge in Boonton listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

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Stop the Mahwah BOE Tower to engage legal assistance to continue opposition to the construction of a cell tower on environmentally sensitive land owned by the Board of Education but designated as wetlands, critical wildlife habitat and a permanent conservation area.

Washington Township Land Trust to produce engineering specs and drawings to repair the outlet column and stabilize the southwest side of Long Valley's Obadiah LaTourette Grist and Saw Mill, established in 1750 and listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Grassroots organizations are defined as non-governmental organizations with a total annual operating budget of less than \$200,000. Grants from the Highlands Coalition cannot be used for political purposes.

Grant applications had to meet at least one of five criteria, with the items at the top getting more weight than those below:

1. Focus on implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan, such as projects that identify, map or verify Highlands natural or cultural resources;
2. Establish a precedent advancing strong environmental or cultural protection in the Highlands;
3. Assist an organization to fight against development in the Highlands that seriously threatens or damages natural or cultural resources;
4. Support capacity building of Highlands Region grassroots organizations;
5. Educate the public about Highlands cultural resources or water and other natural resources.

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition represents a diverse network of organizations working to protect the Highlands, ranging from small citizens groups working in one community to large state-wide organizations. The Coalition works to protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands and to preserve the quality and quantity of the region's drinking water. More information is available at www.njhighlandscoalition.org.